

News from Ed Markey

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BIG OIL ROYALTY RELIEF SHOULD BE SUSPENDED, SAYS REP. MARKEY

*Lawmaker Calls for Relief to Hurricane Victims Not Big
Oil 'Royalty Relief'*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing entitled “Recovering from Hurricane Katrina” to discuss the impact of Hurricane Katrina on oil markets and emerging consumer concerns about gas price gouging. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Democratic Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, today issued the following remarks:

“The energy course we are on is insanity. We are dangerously dependent on oil from the Middle East because our transportation system is dependent on oil - a commodity which God put in vast quantities under the Arabian desert, not in the USA. The consequences of this global reality for the United States are well-known. We desperately work to exact every last drop of oil from our own dwindling reserves while we prostrate ourselves before OPEC. We are polluting our air, our children are getting asthma at record rates, the global climate is warming, our hurricanes are getting more numerous and stronger, our wetlands are disappearing, we put pipelines and well heads and roads and airports in our national wildlife refuges, we wink at the human rights abuses of OPEC, we treat as allies countries which incubate terrorism, we shower tax credits and royalty relief on companies which are already drowning in their own profits. We are addicted to oil and we are making bad decisions to feed our addiction.

“Exxon, just one oil company, made \$15 billion alone in just 6 months. Lord knows what kind of windfall is coming their way this month. My Republican colleagues are actually arguing with a straight face that if we just give the oil companies more incentive to drill for oil, we'll improve the situation **THIS IS NOT A TIME FOR ROYALTY RELIEF TO OIL COMPANIES THAT ARE DROWNING IN RECORD PROFITS -- THIS IS A TIME FOR DISASTER RELIEF TO FAMILIES DROWNING IN THE ATTICS OF LOUISIANA AND MISSISSIPPI.**

“And this is a time to commit ourselves to sharply reducing our perilous reliance on oil as the dominant transportation fuel. This week, America was humbled in the eyes of the world because it turns out that we need as much help from them as we assume they need from us. Will Katrina wake up America to the consequences of its failed energy policy, or will it just go on its merry way, continuing to pretend that drilling for oil on the fishing grounds of George's Bank or the caribou calving grounds of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will prevent the next catastrophe?

“Even before Katrina, Americans were contending with a doubling of the price of oil in a very short period of time. Airlines are getting clobbered, farmers are getting clobbered, truckers and florists and plumbers -- all over America, people are wondering whether this Administration is ever going to move in a direction that addresses the hopes of every American rather than just the wish-list of huge wealthy corporations. The scene at the gas pump is outrageous. The unjustified price hikes at the pump have caused panic buying, gouging and shortages, and all the President has to say about it is "don't drive as much if you don't need to." There is absolutely no sense coming from the leaders of our land that this is a time for the oil industry to hold back so that the rest of the country can get back on its feet. No, instead the Administration and this Congress acts as if the OIL INDUSTRY IS THE VICTIM! What an upside down world. The price of oil right now guarantees that the oil industry -- even those segments of it that sustained direct damage from Hurricane Katrina -- will be repaired and back in operation promptly.”

Rep. Markey, who previously called for a task force to investigate gas price gouging, has provided research on the skyrocketing oil industry profits which can be found at <http://www.house.gov/markey/>. Rep. Markey will also be introducing legislation to reduce our oil dependency by improving fuel efficiency standards for automobiles.